

Phyllis Mintzer Called to the Torah

Phyllis Mintzer, Kadimah's Head Teacher and teacher of Hebrew and Judaic Studies to the B'nai Mitzvah class, will herself be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Shabbat morning, March 14. A certified Reform Jewish Educator with 50 years of teaching to her credit, Phyllis recently retired from her job as registrar at UAHF Camp Swig.

Phyllis' journey toward her Bat Mitzvah "goes way back" to the Orthodox household she grew up in, which was framed by Jewish values of Torah, and where her father and grandfather were involved in studying Torah. "Torah governed life, but as a girl I didn't feel

it was mine. It supported me, but my thread couldn't connect with it. I could study it, but not read from it. (Later) as a Reform Jew, I could read from the Torah, but it wasn't passed to me from the Ark. I want it to be mine intellectually and physically, publicly, in a community where I feel safe and nurtured and supported."

It is especially meaningful to Phyllis

Continued on page 8



Phyllis Mintzer

La'atid Hits the Slopes

Leave your worries in the city and join La'atid for a weekend in the Sierra. La'atid is sponsoring CSZ's first ever ski trip to Lake Tahoe on the weekend of March 13-15. Whether you want to slalom the downhill runs, cross-country ski through the woods or just hang out with some cool queer Jews in the mountains, this weekend is for you. Havdallah in the hostel, board games galore and much more is in store for La'atid's weekend at the Clair Tappan Lodge in Donner Pass. The price is right—\$43 a night for lodging and three meals a day! We will carpool up Friday evening and leave after a full day of skiing on Sunday. To sign up or for more information, call Chaya Rivka Mayerson (668-9407) or Renée in the office.

Construction Open House

Join us on April 5, 2-4 pm, for a tour of our Dolores Street property. Meet with members of the Architecture and Design and Fundraising Committees to hear about physical and fiscal aspects of our new home. Wear sturdy shoes and clothes that can get dusty. Please use the 16th Street entrance (around the corner from 290 Dolores St.).

Lights, Camera Purim

Shake your grogger, put on your best wig and come celebrate Purim on March 11. Have you ever considered Haman as Darth Vader or Vashti as Madonna? Well, this is the year to get creative. Dress up as your favorite movie star and dance the night away at CSZ's Purim 5758 bash. A costume parade for the kids, a costume contest for adults and a creative noise-maker contest will all be part of the evening's festivities. The evening will begin at 5:30 pm with art activities for kids, sponsored by Kadimah, followed at 6:30 by a synagogue-wide Megillah reading. And when the Megillah closes the party begins. Don't miss it! (See flier for details.)

CSZ Interim Space Information

Contacting us: Our telephone, fax and e-mail remain the same.

Telephone: (415) 861-6932

Fax: (415) 861-6081

E-mail: shaarzahav@igc.apc.org

Website: www.shaarzahav.org

Writing us: Please send all roster updates, newsletter submissions, dues payments, donations and other materials to our new home. Use this address for writing to us only.

Congregation Sha'ar Zahav
290 Dolores Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Visiting us: Rabbi Litman and our office staff are sharing space with the staff of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, 3281 16th St., catty-corner from our new building. Our drop-in hours are limited. Please call us before dropping by.

Worship services: All Shabbat services, except our monthly East Bay service, are being held at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church. Healing services are at Congregation Sherith Israel, 2266 California St.

Meetings: Va'ad meetings remain open to all members, and are at 345 Church St. (Church Street Gardens). For the location of committee meetings, contact the chair of the committee.

Pesach

Save the date! Sha'ar Zahav's Congregational Seder will be on the second night of Passover, Saturday, April 11. Complete details and a registration form will be available in the April *Forward*.

"Be Happy, It's Adar"

So goes the traditional Jewish greeting of this season. Adar is the month in which Purim (March 12 this year) is celebrated; it is also the final month of the Jewish calendar. This can be a bit confusing since most of us imagine that the Jewish New Year begins in the autumn, at Rosh Hashana. However, although Rosh Hashana marks the changeover in the number of the years, it falls in the middle of the Jewish year. The first new moon of spring marks the actual beginning of the Jewish year, and it is fast approaching.



Rabbi Jane Litman

As Jews, we achieve closure on the past year by throwing a party. Purim is perhaps the most joyous (and certainly the silliest) of Jewish holy days. We celebrate with masks, noise-makers, obstreperous activities, funny stories, costumes (cross-dressing is a venerable Purim tradition) and general mayhem. Purim is cross-cultural in its essence, the Jewish equivalent of Mardi Gras, Chinese New Year, even Halloween, a time when the usual rules of decorum are suspended.

But Purim isn't entirely like these holidays either. On Halloween, our children run from door to door demanding treats with threats of mischief. On Purim, we give goodies (*shalach manot*) rather than demand them. Mardi Gras is a street party; Purim still takes place inside the synagogue. And, of course, being Jews, the "people of the book," even during our most boisterous holy day, we read a sacred text, the scroll of Esther. Purim underscores that as Jews we are both similar to our neighbors and unique.

One of the most puzzling aspects of Purim is the associated consumption of liquor. Perhaps our sages viewed the Jewish people as such a serious crowd that they felt we needed to imbibe schnapps in order to relax and let our hair down a bit. It is important to note that this puts a burden on people who are in recovery. The custom of intoxication on Purim does not supersede the

Jewish mitzvah of *pekuach nefesh*—protecting life and health. Encouraging people in recovery to drink alcohol is a violation of Jewish law and ethics. For Jews in recovery, drinking does not serve to lower inhibition, it is a threat to well-being. The point of Purim is to have a good time, not to act in ways harmful to ourselves and others. Purim is about celebratory chaos, but it is a chaos still structured within the system of mitzvot.

So be happy; it's Adar! Rummage through those closets for flashy costumes, bake some hamantashen, put together little goodie packages for friends, tell bad puns and silly tales. And come to Sha'ar Zahav to hear and be part of the whole megillah. I look forward to seeing you there.

High Reform Service

Please join us on April 3 as we worship in the Classical Reform tradition. The Sha'ar Zahav choir, conducted by José Luis Moscovich, will sing choral works by the great German Jewish composers of the 19th century. Gary Hunt, the organist of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, will accompany the choir and perform solo pieces. We will read traditional Reform poetic translations of the prayers and hear Rabbi Litman speak about our Reform heritage. It promises to be an unusual evening and a unique ritual experience for Sha'ar Zahav.

Rabbi Litman's Spring Classes

Rabbi Litman will teach two different six-week classes on Wednesday evenings beginning March 25. At 7 pm, she will lead an informal drop-in discussion group on "faith-talk." This is the place to discuss topics such as God, belief, faith, hope, despair and prayer. At 8 pm, she will teach a course entitled Contemporary Jewish Thought. The class will examine the work of key 20th century Jewish theologians including Martin Buber, Abraham Joshua Heschel and Mordecai Kaplan. Students will continue with the writings of today's Jewish thinkers such as Rachel Adler, Zalman Shachter-Shalomi, Neil Gillman and Rebecca Alpert, and explore topics including feminism, post-modernism, neo-Hassidism and their relationship to contemporary Jewish ideology. Please call the office for details.

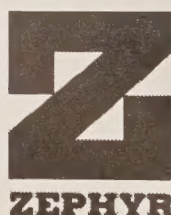
Rabbi News

Rabbi Litman will be presenting a paper on "Women's Voices and Torah" at the annual Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association conference from March 14-18 in Los Angeles. She will also be presenting a paper on "Creating Inclusive Community" at the annual Central Conference of American Rabbis conference in June.

Rabbi Litman was elected to the Executive Board of the Pacific Association of Reform Rabbis and will be attending the Executive Board meeting on March 2.



Thanks to member support,
I have contributed over
\$4,000 to Mishkan Dolores.
Thank you!



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Mishkan Dolores Update

—Tiela Chalmers

Construction has begun in earnest on our new building at 290 Dolores. At long last, our general contractor, Mayta Jensen, is on-site and has begun structural demolition. The design team is making final decisions about details, finishes and colors. See page 1 for details on our first construction open house.

Financial News and Fundraising

We are incredibly close to our original \$1.3 million fundraising goal: to date we have raised \$1,282,479 (99%) in pledges. And just one year into the campaign, we have an amazing \$536,210 (42%) in cash. Thanks to everyone who has paid on the pledges and to those who have accelerated their payments, and congratulations to the Fundraising Committee.

Now that the subcontractors' bids are in and we are proceeding with the general contractor, we have a much clearer idea of the total cost of the construction. Those costs have turned out to be somewhat higher than anticipated for several reasons:

- City permit requirements have become more stringent; in particular, we have had to add multiple-stall bath-

rooms on the first floor.

- We must install a state-of-the-art fire safety alarm system in addition to a complete sprinkler system.

- We will not be able to reuse some of the electrical wiring, as we had hoped. We must put in new wiring throughout the entire building.

- Fabricating the trusses—the huge triangle-shaped beams that form the inside of our specially-designed raised roof—will cost more than expected. These will be made off-site and lifted onto the building with a crane. (This will be quite dramatic, and carefully coordinated with our neighbors to minimize disruption.)

- Items such as desks, tables and chairs, and sliding doors separating the library and chapel from the sanctuary were eliminated from the initial budget to save money, with the idea that they would be part of a subsequent fundraising effort. We have decided, however, that we need these sooner rather than later.

These increases mean that we will begin our phase two fundraising efforts with a goal of an additional \$450,000.

We hope to raise these additional funds from nonmember gifts, foundation grants, new member pledges, and members who can increase their pledges or accelerate their payments to reduce the interest we are paying on our loans.

Please consider what you can do. If you haven't already, can you increase your pledge or pay it in less than five years? If you can help in this second-phase fundraising effort, whether by soliciting donors, writing grant proposals or providing behind the scenes help in organizing the pledge drive, please call Ellie Cohen (455-0416), Lisa Katz (821-7746) or Tiela Chalmers (386-6738).

Please join me in congratulating the Architecture and Design Committee for their ongoing and intensive work with our construction team to ensure that the cost of our new building continues to be as low as possible.

Interim Space News

Things are going very well with our neighbors, friends and host St. Matthew's Lutheran Church. Their welcome continues to be warm and friendly, and we appreciate how CSZ members and visitors have treated the space, and its owners, with respect and gratitude.

We are continuing to work on the parking situation. When this newsletter went to press, parking was still available in the lot behind Mission High School (on Dolores between 17th and 18th Streets) at a cost of \$3 per car. We are considering alternatives, particularly if use of this lot does not increase sufficiently to make it financially feasible. If you have any ideas or thoughts on parking, please call Tiela. In the meantime, please note that people who park between the median strips on Dolores have been ticketed during services.

Schedule for Moving In

It is still too early to predict when we'll move in. We expect to move our offices in early May when the major construction is completed. Construction on the sanctuary and the finishes for the rest of the building are expected to continue into the summer.

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Thoughts on Religious School

As many of you know, the congregation, guided by the Children's Education Board, is considering the question of whether to hold religious school on Saturday or Sunday. This question deserves very careful consideration, as it has implications for all aspects of our community, now and in the future. Whatever the decision, I have faith that we will come to a decision consistent with our values. As was clear in the meeting I attended with Kadimah parents, we all love our children and are united by the desire to give them the best life we can. This discussion is not a contest about who is the best Jew or parent, but rather a process of discovering what works for our community. Here are some of my thoughts on the subject based on a recent experience.



Diana Buchbinder

Today is Sunday. It is raining, windy and cold, and I have dragged my daughter away from a sleepover at a friend's house to attend Midrasha (the Hebrew high school in Berkeley). She is overtired, hungry and angry. Her hair isn't combed; she hasn't eaten and promptly informs me she will not be leaving the car when we arrive. I am thinking that I could live without this drive every week and am getting worn down after nine years of religious school. We make it across the bridge: it is still pouring. She does refuse to leave the car and tearfully says that I am ruining her life (not to mention starving her). We sit, blocking the street in front of the synagogue, locked in a battle of wills. Neither of us is sure who will win.

Finally she says, "Well, at least you could get me some food before I have to go in!" We drive off; I say some appropriately angry parental words about being a Jew, education and commitment. I do not think she cares. We drive back to the synagogue, she gets out and I tell her she can leave an hour early. She says no, she will stay, but we need to discuss why I require something of her that was never required of me.

It is this last statement, along with our recent discussions, that have me

thinking as I wait the three hours, for her to finish Midrasha. It is a good question—why do I require that my children have a Jewish education? Over the years since kindergarten, it has certainly interfered with many things: sports, parties and sleeping. I can hardly remember, let alone count, the number of times we had to miss Kadimah or soccer, come late, leave early or beg for a schedule change, because our Saturday mornings were spoken for. Do I require this for my children, or for me, I wonder? Why do it at all? Why does it matter?

In thinking about why it matters, I realize that my answer has much to do with what kind of parent I want to be. There are other answers, about community and faith, but those aren't the main reasons. I have plans for my children. I have things I want them to know, experiences I want them to have, and a vision of the people I want them to grow up to be. I am sensible enough to know that I cannot determine their destiny, and I spent enough time in graduate psychology courses to be familiar with the nature/nurture dilemma. I believe I can be an influence on my children, and that I have an obligation to do so. The choices I make in my life will serve as a model for them. Choosing to be committed to their Jewish education is part of that for me. I see it as my way of giving them the tools that they will need in life. I cannot control how, or even if, they will choose to use those tools, but I will know that they have them.

I see my daughter coming up the street with two other Midrasha girls. They are smiling and laughing. She gets in the car and tells me about their visit to an old age home as part of social action. What I did this morning was for her benefit—her rebellion was for mine. I reflect again at how tricky the work of parenting is, and how comforting it would be to already have a child grown up "all right." My belief that I am doing the right thing returns.

At our house, the real struggle is around getting to religious school, regardless of the day. I believe there are things to be said in favor of either day for Kadimah. There is really no right or wrong day for religious school.

Torah Study

CSZ will hold Torah study sessions each Shabbat morning during March beginning at 9:30 am, as follows:

- March 7 at Congregation Emanu-El, led by Robin Leonard
- March 14 at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, leader TBA
- March 21 at Congregation Emanu-El, led by Rabbi Litman
- March 28 at Congregation Emanu-El, leader TBA

The March 21 session will be followed by Rabbi Litman's class, "Learn What Our Children Learn." Congregation Emanu-El is located at 2 Lake Street at Arguello.

Tot Shabbat

At this month's tot Shabbat, on March 27, CSZ's preschoolers will prepare for Passover. Families will begin a new tradition this month of joining together for a brown bag Shabbat dinner at 6:30 pm before the 7:15 pm service. The services and program are planned for children ages two to five, but everyone is welcome. Tot Shabbat will regularly be held at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church unless otherwise noted.

HIV + Support Group

CSZ has ongoing support services for members living with HIV/AIDS and their families and partners each month, in addition to quarterly Shabbat dinners. Mark your calendars:

Saturday, March 21 (*third Saturday this month!*) at 3 pm: Support Group led by Rabbi Litman and Robert Tat, at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church.

If you have any questions or would like to put your name on our confidential mailing list, please let us know. Join us.

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Members of the congregation receive the *Forward*. For \$18/year, nonmembers will receive a *Forward* subscription.

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 **Display Ads** are \$15 per column inch for nonmembers and \$10 per column inch for members, with discounts available for size and frequency. Ads should be camera ready; any ads that require typesetting, camera and/or artwork will be subject to a one-time production charge.


Classified Ads are \$5 for up to 20 words, plus \$1 for each 10 additional words. No personals accepted.

Payment must accompany ad and should be sent to Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, 290 Dolores St., San Francisco, California 94103, marked: attention *Forward* advertising. We reserve the right to reject any ad for reasons of taste.

March 1998/Volume 21, Issue 7.

Advanced Biblical Hebrew Class

Phyllis Mintzer will teach an eight-session class in Advanced Biblical Hebrew beginning Wednesday, March 18. Students will be introduced to vocabulary and grammatical principles.

 The ability to read Hebrew and understand the basic syntax of the language are prerequisites. The fee for the class is \$70 for CSZ members and \$85 for nonmembers.

Rosh Chodesh Nisan

Celebration of (Incomplete) Liberation

—Nina Wouk

In the merit of its righteous women, Israel was freed from Egypt. So states an ancient midrash, which gives credit for the Exodus to women who gave birth with no midwife, hidden in groves, biting their lips to stifle cries of pain, rather than risk their newborn children falling prey to Pharaoh's genocidal plans. This acknowledgment of heroism is unusual in a tradition which gives women scant credit for physical courage. Along with Miriam's role as prophet and ritual leader, it gives Pesach, the commemoration of the Exodus, a special resonance for women.

This year the New Moon of Nisan, the month of Pesach, falls on Shabbat—a doubly joyous celebration. For women the celebration is triple, because the New Moon, Rosh Chodesh, has been a women's holiday since ancient times, and is observed by increasing numbers of modern Jewish women.

In the days of the Temple, the first confirmed sighting of the New Moon was an important public occasion for all Israel. Large parts of the ritual calendar depended on this event. However the day was not necessarily joyous. Priests observed Rosh Chodesh as a mini-Yom Kippur, a day of fasting and soul-searching.

There is, of course, a midrash to explain this. In the book of Exodus, when Moses fails to return from Mount Sinai, the people complain to Aaron that they need a replacement. Aaron bids the people to collect gold ornaments, which the women decline to do, but the men return with ornaments, which Aaron uses to make the golden image of a young bull that the people treat as a god. This major error results in Moses' breaking the Tablets of the Law and God's threatening to destroy the people.

The Torah records that the women donated precious metals only to the Tabernacle, built later at God's instruction.

The rabbis interpret these two events to mean that the women of that generation refused to turn to idol-worship at a time of insecurity, trusting instead in the God who freed them from slavery. For this reason, Rosh Chodesh became a day of penitence for priests and a reward for women.

Since the fall of the Temple, Rosh Chodesh has been celebrated in synagogues by the announcement of the new

month on the preceding Shabbat, by including the Hallel in the Rosh Chodesh morning service, and by special Haftarah readings for a Shabbat that immediately precedes or coincides with Rosh Chodesh.

In addition, women in many Jewish communities have treated Rosh Chodesh as a holiday, celebrated by resting from work, feasting and giving tzedakah. In addition, groups of women meet on or near Rosh Chodesh for prayer, study, ritual and celebration.

Men's New Moon rituals have been recorded and constant for centuries, while women's have been intermittent and frequently reinvented. This history of pervasive inequality shows that the Exodus was only a partial, imperfect liberation. Its celebration is also marred: in most traditional communities, Jewish women prepared the seder meal so Jewish men could retell their liberation from slavery; women's lesser freedom was only a reflection of men's.

There is of course a relevant midrash. God, this midrash tells us, originally made the moon of equal size with the sun. The moon, foreseeing rivalry when both shared the sky, questioned this. God, in irritation, diminished the moon's size and light, thus making serious competition impossible.

The moon clearly stands for woman-kind, to whom Rosh Chodesh was given as a holiday in partial reparation for God's injustice. Some believe that the moon eventually will be restored to equal glory with the sun, sharing the sky in amity.

When can we expect this happy turn of events? According to yet another rabbinic tale, it will happen when we are ready.

In the rare instance that Shabbat coincides with Rosh Chodesh, CSZ, like other congregations, wants to acknowledge both. On Rosh Chodesh Nisan, because of its history as a women's holiday, we plan to depart from our usual egalitarian customs. We recognize the implicit irony of this choice, both a rebellion against and an accommodation of traditional sexist segregation. On Friday night, March 27, we invite you to join women from the Ritual Committee in a double celebration, of Shabbat and of the month that began the still-incomplete liberation of our people.

Women's History Month

Sha'ar Zahav will celebrate Women's History Month at two special events. From March 27 to 29, CSZ is co-sponsoring a Jewish women's retreat. (See the enclosed flier for details.) On Saturday, March 21, CSZ's Rosh Chodesh group is sponsoring a Shabbat potluck lunch at which Rabbi Litman will present a slide show of Jewish women's lives throughout history. The lunch will begin at noon at the home of Robin Leonard and Tory Weiser, 127 Madrid St., San Francisco.

This program is part of a national celebration of Women's History Month. Jewish agencies will commemorate the lives of three inspiring Jewish women: Rebecca Gratz, Lillian Wald and Molly Picon have been chosen as the focus for this year's Women's History Month by the Jewish Women's Archives and Ma'yan, the Jewish Women's Project of New York.

Rebecca Gratz (1781-1869), a pioneer of Jewish charitable work and a religious educator, established and led America's first independent Jewish women's charitable society, the Philadelphia Orphan Asylum, and the first Jewish Foster Home in Philadelphia. She was the first person to apply the Sunday school format to Jewish education,

by founding the Hebrew Sunday School. This school, which hired only female teachers, gave Jewish women their first public role in teaching religion.

Lillian Wald (1867-1940) spent her life working for immigrants' rights and providing affordable housing and health care to residents of New York's Lower East Side. Wald's dedication to the causes of nursing, unionism, tenement reform, women's suffrage, child welfare and antimilitarism demonstrated her strong progressive faith in the ability of institutions to realize the vision of a unified humanity. She founded the Henry Street Settlement, which still stands today in its original site and now serves the neighborhood's largely Asian, African-American and Latino populations.

This year we also honor Molly Picon (1898-1992), a lifelong performer in Yiddish theater. For more than 80 years, Picon delighted audiences all over the world on stage, radio, film and television. She seemed simultaneously all-American in her tomboy persona, which led to fame and fortune, and entirely Jewish in her devotion to Yiddish and her efforts on behalf of Jewish refugees and the State of Israel. Scripts, costumes and pictures of Picon are housed today at the Museum of the City of New York.

Shabbat Across America

On Friday night, March 20, Sha'ar Zahav will join 65,000 other North American Jews in an effort to revitalize Shabbat observance and display interdenominational unity by taking part in "Shabbat Across America." The evening was conceived and organized by the National Jewish Outreach Program. Shabbat Across America is an evening during which synagogues from Judaism's four major movements—Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative and Orthodox—open their doors and invite in unaffiliated Jews.

Because of CSZ's special outreach to gay and lesbian Jews, we will join this outreach effort and make sure that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Jews are invited to a welcoming space that night. We will host a vegetarian Shabbat dinner at 6 pm. Our regularly scheduled 8:15 Shabbat service leaders will provide more explanations of the service than usual so that newcomers feel welcome. CSZ members are encouraged to join in this event by coming to dinner and bringing friends, family and co-workers to experience the vitality of a CSZ Shabbat. RSVP to Renée in the office if you'd like to attend the dinner.

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Words of His Own: Israeli Gay Stories

In honor of the 50th anniversary of Israeli Statehood, CSZ is pleased to co-host the Israel Theater Production, *Words of His Own* on Sunday, March 8 at 2 pm at the New Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, 25 Van Ness Avenue. *Words of His Own* is an evening of dramatized gay short stories by Israeli writers that offers an alternative to the dominant conception of Israeli masculinity. A coarse macho masculinity has been a predominant expression of maleness in Israeli society and culture. This performance artfully and courageously depicts an alternative: a gay masculinity that until now has existed only on the periphery.

The production reveals with frankness and honesty the intimate details and dilemmas of unrequited love, life in and out of the closet and coming to terms with one's sexuality. The San Francisco performance of *Words of His Own* will be followed by a discussion of gay life in Israel, inclusive of male and female experiences, facilitated by Enulla Shamir, an Israeli lesbian.

First staged during Gay Pride Week 1994 in Tel Aviv, this innovative theater event is being brought to the Bay Area by the generous sponsorship of the New Conservatory Theatre and the Lesbian and Gay Task Force and the Israel Center of the Jewish Community Federation. Please call Renée in the office or the New Conservatory Theatre (861-8972) to reserve your ticket.

The Bay Area Celebrates!



Social Action/Tikkun Olam Committee

At its January meeting, the committee reviewed past Sha'ar Zahav social action activities. Everyone appreciated Eloise Magenheimer's continued dedication to political action. The committee came up with a dual approach to increasing the congregation's involvement in social action. First is to create regular forums to educate the CSZ community on current political and social issues. The committee will look into holding quarterly social action Shabbat dinners with a speaker on a pertinent topic.

The second area of focus will be on direct service. This will include one time events such as Sukkot in April, the AIDS walk and various political demonstrations, as well as consistent involvement with an as yet to be chosen local organization. If you are interested in being on the Social Action committee, please call the office.

Adult Education Committee Plans

Under the leadership of Sue Bojdak, the Adult Education Committee has been revitalized. Most of the January meeting was spent brainstorming programming ideas for the spring and summer. Ideas for ongoing classes included Rabbi Litman's teaching a class on prominent 20th century Jewish thinkers, creating a Yiddish culture series around the time of the California Klezmer Camp and the continuation of Prayer Book Hebrew. Ideas for one-time events focused on CSZ panels bringing together people with different identities such as HIV+/HIV- members, interfaith/single-faith couples, etc. and on one-time classes teaching the basics of the holidays. To get involved, call Sue Bojdak (510/601-6791).

My Conversion Continues

Pork—To Eat or Not To Eat

—Tory Weiser

I'm not talking about keeping a kosher home. I don't feel the need to be that observant. Maybe that means I'm not as devout as I could be. If so, so be it.

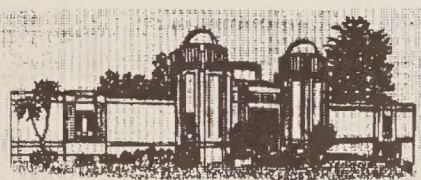
What I am talking about is keeping some part of kashrut at home. I'm allergic to shellfish, so that's not any sacrifice. I don't often have meat with dairy so again I wouldn't be giving up much of anything. Then there's pork. Pork is my favorite meat. My knees get weak when I think about barbecued baby back ribs and the thought of ham or bacon makes me salivate. Pork would be very hard for me to give up. So I ponder such a sacrifice. But that's the piece of kashrut that I crave, the knowledge that I've given up something that I relish for my Judaism.

I don't particularly care that pigs don't chew their cud. I do want to further immerse myself in living Jewishly. I want to practice Judaism on a daily basis and be aware that I've differentiated myself from the Gentile I used to be. I want to feel more Jewish and be more Jewish. It's not enough to have given up Christmas. I want to prove to myself that I can be more disciplined about my Jewishness.

I think the notion of sacrifice is not all bad. In fact, it may be a sign of my devotion to, and respect for, God, particularly as God mandated the prohibition against pork.

I've not yet decided what to do about kashrut. I already feel guilty when I do eat pork. I've made several decisions to not eat pork when I've had the chance. The stash of bacon I keep in the freezer keeps slowly moving farther back.

Maybe I've already decided and am still in a state of disbelief.



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Members' Yahrzeits

7	Isabel Fishman
16	Ted Mendonca
20	Robert Coffman
21	Ede Rosen
26	Michael Lipson
28	Neill Rosen
31	Marvin Steele



Phyllis Mintzer

Continued from page 1

that her 73rd birthday marks 60 years from the time she would have had a Bat Mitzvah, had it been allowed. She is struck that this is not a life cycle event, but that she has "stepped out of time" to do this. "It is important to be able to say 'I didn't come here by myself.' I want to acknowledge everyone who accompanied me on this journey: my parents, my husband George, my children, all my students and the CSZ community that gave me the courage to do it."

Phyllis' biggest challenges in studying have been learning to chant Torah (with the help of Brian Besser) and wrestling with the text of her Torah portion (Ki Tisa). In this parashah, Moses pleads with God after the Israelites have built the golden calf. "As a woman, I didn't hear God at Sinai. Moses speaks face to face with God and I missed this. If Torah had been more accessible to me as a woman, maybe I would have heard God speak to me face to face like my father and grandfather did." Despite the pain of past exclusion and the challenge of her Torah portion, there is enormous joy for her in the process. "Every time I chant in Hebrew, something else becomes clear. The meaning gets clearer and clearer."

Mazel tov to our teacher and friend Phyllis Mintzer, her husband George, and her entire family on this joyous occasion.

Oneg Sponsorship

These generous people sponsored the oneg Shabbat in recent weeks:

2/27 Edith Stahl in honor of the naming of Dorothy Z. Goldstein-Stahl, and Lyssa Friedman, in honor of Daphne Stuart's entrance into the covenant.

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

Birthdays

1 Lisa Geduldig
1 Arthur Slepian
4 Emma Cuttler
5 Stephanie Gödt
5 Edward Pollock
5 Nancy Wecker
8 Ann Biderman
8 David Couch
8 Phyllis Mintzer
9 Perry Paker
10 Stephen Shotland
10 Dana Vinicoff
11 Jessie Ap'neva
12 Jerome Geffner
13 Michael Frank
13 Mary Schroeder
14 Dey Rose
14 Michael Shaps
15 Judith Berkowitz
15 Jeffrey Davidson
16 Jonathan Pannor
16 Alice Prussin
17 Ian Sweedler
18 Ann Bauman
19 Rachel Wahba
21 Mike Abramson
21 Jeffrey Shuman
22 Ezra Barth-Rogers
22 Talia Barth-Rogers
22 Ellen Novogrodsky
23 Leslie Einhorn
23 Dakota Fine
24 Lucy Bernholz
27 Rebecca Doctors
28 Mary Jane Eisenberg
28 Lucy Fine
28 Michael Hulton
29 Robert Gutterman
29 Ira Hirschfield
29 Harold Parker
30 Carol Hoffman
31 Neil Grungras

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

Anniversaries

3 Dyan Dreisbach and Joyce Newstat
9 Richard Sinkoff and Doug Robson
11 Mark Oliver and Steven Polsky
15 Bernard Choden and Lois Scott
15 Seth Frohman and Raphael Hoch
17 Alicia Brite and Leslie Halpern
21 Judith Heiman and Martha Moon
24 Geraldine Barr and Maxine Epstein
29 Judith Klain and Marie Chavez
31 Jessie Ap'neva and Nina Wouk

New Members

The Membership Committee is pleased to announce that our congregation gained the following new members this month. A warm welcome to the most recent people to join our family:

Alyson Feldman and Donovan Somera

Elisa Friedlander

Marjorie Bennet

Ellen Kugler

Ronald Edelman

We are grateful to see our congregation grow. It is up to all of us to help our new members feel welcome as they become active participants in our community.

Naches

To Lucy Bernholz and Paula Fleisher, on their engagement.

To Dey and Antoinette Rose, on the birth of their daughter, Genevieve Ursula Rose.

To Ruby Cymrot-Wu, on becoming Bat Mitzvah.

To Debra Gelber and Avi Pfeffer, on their engagement.

To Daphne Stuart, on her entrance into the covenant.

To James Carlson, on his entrance into the covenant.

To Alyson Feldman and Donovan Somera, on their engagement.

CONGREGATION SHA'AR ZAHAV

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or by appointment (861-6932)

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& Chaya Rivka Mayerson, M.A.

Psychological Assistant #PSB24143 Supervised by Caren Ludmer, Psy.D. Lic. # PSY 10661

For more information, or to register, call:

Rachel Biale, LCSW (510) 704-7475, ext. 722

Sponsored by Jewish Family & Children's Services of the East Bay

Contributions

AIDS Fund

Richard Sinkoff, in memory of Stephen Mistler.

Richard Sinkoff, in memory of Alice Bernholz Sinkoff.

Bikkur Cholim Fund

Allan Berenstein, in memory of Allen Harris.

Phyllis and George Mintzer, in memory of Marilyn O'Keeffe.

Lisa Ochs and Lea Salem, in memory of Marilyn O'Keeffe.

Dr. Murray and Mrs. Edith Hilton, in memory of Belle Rainer.

Leah Kaizer, in memory of Belle Rainer.

Bikkur Cholim Fund in memory of Isa Cymrot-Wu

Annie Winters and Nina Raff.

Deirdre Devine.

Nancy, Gordon and Sarah Fels.

Phyllis and George Mintzer.

Lisa Ochs and Lea Salem.

Children's Education Fund

Walter Leiss, in memory of Marilyn O'Keeffe.

Dan Bellm and Rabbi Yoel Kahn.

Ellen Lewin and Liz Goodman, in memory of Maxine Shear.

Richard Sinkoff, in joyous anticipation of the upcoming wedding of Lucy Bernholz and Paula Fleisher.

Ellen Lewin and Liz Goodman, in memory of Marilyn O'Keeffe.

Ellen Lewin and Liz Goodman, in memory of David Lewin.

Ron Lezell, in memory of Belle Rainer.

Paul Cohen and Bob Gutterman, in memory of Joseph Haas.

General Fund

Nancy Epstein, to commemorate the yahrzeit of Marilyn Epstein Levine.

Allan Berenstein, in memory of Ellen Albin and A. J. Berenstein.

Jerry Rosenstein, in memory of his family.

Ami Zusman, in memory of Harry Trentman.

Elizabeth and Michael Schaffer, in memory of Louis Schaffer.

Eva Zysman, in memory of Dr. Andrew Zysman.

Jeff Friedman, in memory of Bette Friedman.

Laura Trupin and Beth Ross, in memory of Andrew Nadelson.

Linda Jacobson, in memory of Matilda Jacobson.

Jean Sward, in honor of Jeff Friedman.

Nancy Meyer, in memory of Henry Lutz Meyer.

Mark Mackler, in honor of Susan and Richard Goldwasser.

Ron and Rhoda Bernstein, in memory of Chava Rothschild.

Steve Horowitz, in memory of Keith Fenton.

Mishkan Dolores Fund

Steve Griffiths, in honor of Mike Klayman.

Lucy Bernholz, in memory of Alice Bernholz Sinkoff.

Lonette and Stanley Rappoport.

Nina Jo Smith, in memory of Alan Smith.

Roshell Goldman.

Mishkan Dolores Fund in Memory of Marilyn O'Keeffe

Ami Zusman.

Steve Elman and Tom Holt.

Jeff Forman and Paul Nemrow.

Susan Unger and Pam Erwin.

Nina Raff and Annie Winters.

Ellie Cohen and Greta Miskatel.

Leila Raim and Catherine

Wisniewski.

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Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Byron Sigal, in memory of Lillian Sigal.

Ruth Rainero, in memory of Belle Rainer.

Bernard Pechter, in honor of Paul Cohen.

Daniel Halpern.

Lolma Olson, to welcome Rabbi Litman to CSZ.

Barbara Cymrot, Dafna Wu and Ruby Cymrot-Wu, in memory of Isa Cymrot-Wu.

Andy Adler and Ann Braude.

Lolma Olson, in memory of Cliff Olson.

Lolma Olson, in memory of Willie Olson.

Rabbi's Study Fund

of the Mishkan Dolores Fund

Margaret Litman.

Sukkot in April Is Coming

For those of you who dream of painting, we want you. For those of you who love to strap on a tool belt, we need you. For all of you looking for a chance to help those in need in San Francisco, save Sunday, April 26 for Sukkot in April.

Sukkot in April 1997 was memorable. CSZ volunteers' pictures were splashed all over the pages of the newspapers as we were recognized for our volunteer efforts at the Asian Pacific Islander Wellness Center. We added vibrant colors to the walls and coated some wood partitions with finish. Our volunteers helped to make the Asian Pacific Islander Wellness Center a warm and beautiful place for the clients.

We will need help with phone calls, meal planning, supply pick up, advertising and other logistics. Please call Laura Lowe (247-2409) if you are interested.

Condolences

We extend our condolences to members who have suffered recent losses:

Hilary Zaid, on the death of her grandmother, Rose Zaid.

Ruth Rainero, Pieter de Haan, and Ilana and Benjamin Rainero-de Haan, on the death of Ruth's mother, Belle Rainer.

Jonathan Goldman, on the death of his aunt, Shirley Goldman.

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My Family Is Special

Women's Educational Media, the award-winning filmmakers of *It's Elementary: Talking About Gay Issues In School* and *Deadly Deception*, is embarking on a new video entitled *My Family Is Special*. This video will introduce children in kindergarten through third grade to a variety of family structures and provide positive images and vocabulary to help them better understand and appreciate our diverse families. The 20-minute video, produced by CSZ members Debra Chasnoff and Joan Lefkowitz, is one of a three-part series entitled "Respect For All." It profiles children whose families are virtually invisible in most books and audio-visual productions, and gives names to some situations which peers, and often teachers, frequently feel confused or uncomfortable discussing in a neutral manner. The children in the videos will tell their own stories using the vocabulary of divorce, adoption, single parenting, gay dads and lesbian moms, etc.

We need families to participate in *My Family Is Special*. We need engaging, articulate, outgoing kids between the ages of six and ten, of every race, who fall into the following categories:

- children of divorced parents
- adopted children
- children being raised by a family member other than their mother or father (such as a grandparent, aunt or uncle)
- children with single parents (whose other biological parent is not involved)
- children with gay or lesbian parents

Interested families should contact Ariella Ben-Dov at Women's Educational Media (641-4616) or e-mail wemajbd@aol.com.

Classifieds

ALL THINGS MACINTOSH: Professionalize/computerize your business. Get online now. Quicken • Word • Excel • Hard disk tune-up. Roslyn Fuerman 510/526-1209.

KAUAI TROPICAL GARDEN RETREAT: Enchanting setting, perfect for nurturing, healing, romancing. Royal Drive Cottages. Bob Levine/Sandy Meyers Ph/fax, 808/822-2321.

CLUTTER BUSTERS: Afraid to open closets? Packing to move? Pesach spring cleaning? I help minimize and reorganize your home or office. References. Bill: 487-8959.

Synagogue Information

Rabbi Jane Litman

Officers:

President, Diana Buchbinder
(337-6319 or threebuchs@sprynet.com)
First Vice President, David Gellman
Second Vice President, Susan Tubbesing
Treasurer, Arthur Slepian
Recorder, Mark Bowers

Va'ad (Board) Members:

Michael Chertok
Ellie Cohen
Jeff Forman
Lyssa Friedman
Sara Haber
Joe Hample
Lisa Katz
Eileen Levy
Julie Moed

CSZ Staff:

Director of Education, David Shneer
Administrator, Lea Salem
Program Director, Renée Bauer
Kadimah Head Teacher, Phyllis Mintzer
Administrative Assistant, Amy Clark

Committee Chairs:

Adult Education, Sue Bojdak
Archives, open
ARZA contact, Ron Lezell
Baby Chavurah, Lisa Katz
Bequests and Donations, Richard Inlander
Bikkur Cholim, David Shaber
Bisexual Chavurah, Jim Frazin
Book Group, Mark Mackler
Brotherhood, Stephan Howard
Bylaws, Edward Pollock
Cemetery, Richard Inlander
Children's Education Board, Ruth Rainero
Cookbook Project, Robin Leonard
Dues Liaison, Sara Haber
East Bay Services, Hilary Zaid
Endowment Fund, Merry Luskin
Environmental Action, Barak Gale and Brian Besser

Finance, Arthur Slepian
Fine Arts, open
Gift Shop, Jeff Rubin
La'atid, Geoff Benjamin
Leadership Development, Irene Ogus and Paul Cohen
Library, open
Long-Range Planning, Allan Gold
Membership, Ami Zusman
Mishkan Dolores Chair, Tiela Chalmers
Mishkan Dolores Fundraising, Ellie Cohen and Lisa Katz
Mishkan Dolores Architecture and Design, Alice Prussin
Newsletter, Robin Leonard
Past Presidents Council, Merry Luskin
Personnel, Susan Tubbesing
Public Relations, Sharyn Saslafsky
Rabbi Liaison, Allan Gold
Ritual, Lyssa Friedman
Social Action, Eloise Magenheim
Toddler/Pre-school Chavurah, Ilana Bernstein
UAHC National Liaison, Mike Rankin
UAHC Regional Liaison, Daniel Chesir
WCGLJO Liaison, Neil Grungras
Women's Chavurah, open

Members wishing to contact any Va'ad member or committee chair are invited to obtain his or her number from the synagogue office.

Bikkur Cholim: If you or a friend who is a member of Sha'ar Zahav is ill in the hospital or at home, and would like to have a member of the Bikkur Cholim Committee call or visit, please notify the synagogue office.

Member of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and of the World Congress

of Gay and Lesbian Jewish Organizations.

Services are held every Friday evening beginning at 8:15 pm (except as noted), with an Oneg Shabbat following services. Services are generally held on the second Saturday of each month at 10 am — check calendar for each month.

1 Sunday
3 Adar

2 Monday
4 Adar

- 6 pm, Healing service, Congregation Sherith Israel
- 7 pm, Children's Education Board

3 Tuesday
5 Adar

- 6:30 pm, Dues Committee

4 Wednesday
6 Adar

- 7 pm, Architecture and Design
- 7 pm, Newsletter editing

5 Thursday
7 Adar

6 Friday
8 Adar

- 5:50 pm, Candle lighting
- 7 pm, Early Kabbalat Shabbat, led by Sarita Groisser
- 8:15 pm, Shabbat Zachor/Tetzaveh, led by Daniel Chesir and Paul Cohen

7 Saturday
9 Adar

- 9:30 am, Kadimah Family Program, Teacher Appreciation
- 9:30 am, Torah study, Congregation Emanu-El, led by Robin Leonard

8 Sunday
10 Adar

- 2 pm, CSZ attends "Words of His Own," New Conservatory Theater

9 Monday
11 Adar

- 6:30 pm, Va'ad meeting, 345 Church St.
- 7 pm, Newsletter layout

10 Tuesday
12 Adar

11 Wednesday
13 Adar

- Fast of Esther
- 5:30 pm, Children's Purim celebration
 - 6:30 pm, Megillah reading
 - 7:30 pm, Purim party

12 Thursday
14 Adar

Purim

13 Friday
15 Adar

- La'atid ski weekend
- 5:57 pm, Candle lighting
- 7:15 pm, Niggun service, led by Eileen Levy
- 8:15 pm, Shabbat Ki Tisa, led by Rabbi Litman, Jonathan Funk and Steve Weltz; musical accompanist, Maya Soriano

14 Saturday
16 Adar

- La'atid ski weekend
- 9 am, Torah study, St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
- 9:30 am, Kadimah
- 10 am, Bat Mitzvah of Phyllis Mintzer, St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, co-led by Eileen Levy

15 Sunday
17 Adar

- La'atid ski weekend

16 Monday
18 Adar

- 6 pm, Healing service, Congregation Sherith Israel
- 7 pm, Membership Committee

Note: Gray areas indicate religious services.

17 Tuesday
19 Adar

18 Wednesday
20 Adar

- 7 pm, Advanced Biblical Hebrew class

19 Thursday
21 Adar

- 7 pm, Bikkur Cholim Committee

20 Friday
22 Adar

- 6 pm, Shabbat Across America dinner
- 6:04 pm, Candle lighting
- 8:15 pm, East Bay service, home of Ida and Evan Kuluk and Susan Spott
- 8:15 pm, Shabbat Parah/Va-Yakhel-Pekudei, Shabbat Across America, led by Rabbi Litman, Danny Givertz; sermon by Rabbi Litman

21 Saturday
23 Adar

- 9:30 am, Kadimah
- 9:30 am, Torah study, Congregation Emanu-El, led by Rabbi Litman
- 10:30 am, "Learn What Our Children Learn" with Rabbi Litman, Congregation Emanu-El
- Noon, Women's History Month lunch and slide show, 127 Madrid St.
- 3 pm, HIV Support Group, St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, with Rabbi Litman and Robert Tat

22 Sunday
24 Adar

23 Monday
25 Adar

24 Tuesday
26 Adar

25 Wednesday
27 Adar

- 7 pm, Rabbi Litman's drop-in discussion group
- 7 pm, Advanced Biblical Hebrew Class
- 8 pm, Contemporary Jewish Thought class

26 Thursday
28 Adar

- 6:30 pm, Service Leading Initiative, Harvey Milk School
- 7:30 pm, Ritual Committee, Harvey Milk School

27 Friday
29 Adar

- Women's Retreat
- 6:10 pm, Candle lighting
- 6:30 pm, Tot Shabbat, brown bag dinner
- 7:15 pm, Tot Shabbat service, led by Tiela Chalmers
- 8:15 pm, Shabbat Ha Chodesh/Va Yikra service, led by Tova Green, Dev Felder Nolly and women from the Ritual Committee

28 Saturday
1 Nisan

- Women's Retreat
- 9:30 am, Kadimah
- 9:30 am, Torah study, Congregation Emanu-El

29 Sunday
2 Nisan

30 Monday
3 Nisan

31 Tuesday
4 Nisan

APRIL FORWARD DEADLINES

FOR ADVERTISING MONDAY, MARCH 2

To place a display ad, call Roslyn Fuerman (510/526-1209 or froslyn@earthlink.net). To place a classified ad, call the office.

FOR ARTICLES MONDAY, MARCH 2

Please submit articles both on 3½-inch disk and hard copy on paper *double spaced*. Write "Attn. Gaily Forward" on top and mail to CSZ. *No deadline extensions without advance permission of Robin Leonard at 841-0262 or robinl@nolo.com.*

East Bay Services

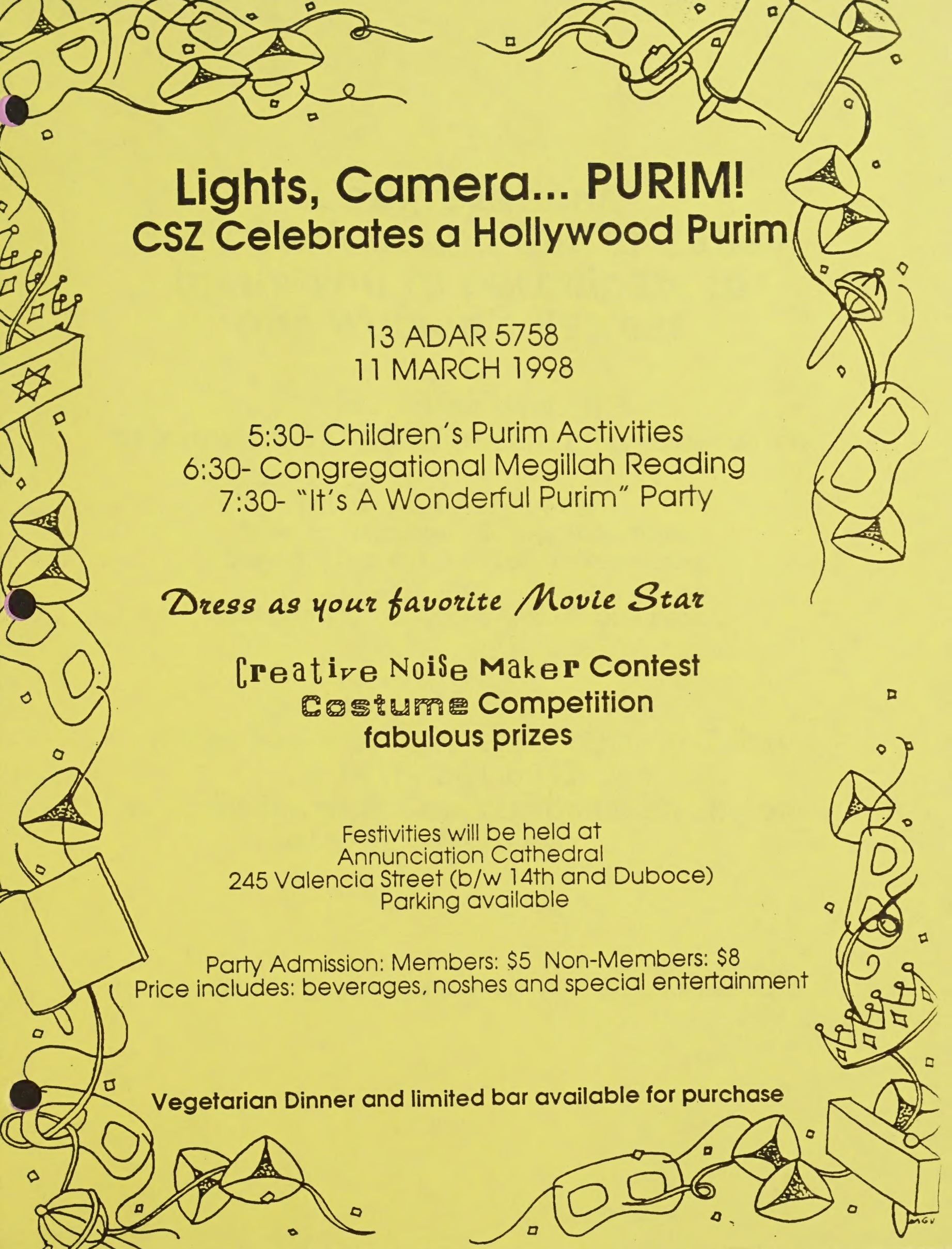
3/20 Ida Kuluk, Susan Spott and Evan Kuluk's home, 4042 Maple Ave., Oakland (510/530-4673)

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Lights, Camera... PURIM!

CSZ Celebrates a Hollywood Purim

13 ADAR 5758
11 MARCH 1998

5:30- Children's Purim Activities
6:30- Congregational Megillah Reading
7:30- "It's A Wonderful Purim" Party

Dress as your favorite Movie Star

[r]eative Noise Maker Contest
Costume Competition
fabulous prizes

Festivities will be held at
Annunciation Cathedral
245 Valencia Street (b/w 14th and Duboce)
Parking available

Party Admission: Members: \$5 Non-Members: \$8
Price includes: beverages, noshes and special entertainment

Vegetarian Dinner and limited bar available for purchase

CS2 Celebrates a Hollywood Putim Lights, Camera... PURIMI!

11 MARCH 1998
13 ADAR 5758

7:30- "It's A Wonderful Putim" Party
6:30- Congregational Megillah Reading
5:30- Children's Putim Activities

Dress as your favorite Movie Star

Festive Nalla Maker Contest
Costume Competition
Fabulous prizes

Festivities will be held at
Annunciation Cathedral
245 Valencia Street (by Jann and Ducca)
Parking available

Price includes beverages, prizes and special entertainment
Party Admission: Members: \$5 Non-Members: \$8

Vegetarian Dinner and limited bar available for purchase

**Congregations
Beth Sholom and Sha'ar Zahav
invite you to participate in
our Women's Retreat**

Join other women
in a rewarding, enriching Shabbat experience

When: March 27-29, 1998

Where: Westerbeke Ranch, in Sonoma

Cost: \$260 members \$285 non-members

Registration is limited! Kashrut observed.

For more information call
Renée Bauer at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav
(415) 861-6932
or Janet Harris at Congregation Beth Sholom
(415) 221-8736 ext. 217

This program is made possible by a grant from the Koret Synagogue Initiative.

Registration form for Women's Retreat
March 27-29 1998
Westerbeke Ranch

Name_____

Address_____

Day phone _____ Evening phone_____

Member of Congregation Beth Sholom or Sha'ar Zahav?

Yes____ No__

Please check the areas in which you would like to participate:

- ____ leading singing
- ____ leading a part of shabbat morning services
- ____ reading Torah, (3-6 p'sukim)
- ____ chanting Haftarah
- ____ storytelling
- ____ movement

The retreat will begin at 3:00 pm, before Shabbat arrives on Friday March 27. We will end with lunch on Sunday, March 29.

All food will be kosher and vegetarian. Upon receipt of this form, you will get a map, a list of what to bring, and more information about the site.

The cost is \$260 for members of CSZ or CBS \$285 for non-members. \$20.00 discount if received before January 30.

\$100 deposit required, refund not guaranteed after Feb. 15

Generous scholarships and payment plans are available. Call Janet at Beth Sholom- (415) 221-8736

If you are able to contribute to our scholarship fund, please send a separate check in the amount of:

\$ 56.00 \$108.00 (multiples of 18) or
\$250.00, for two half scholarships

I am enclosing a check made out to Congregation Beth Sholom for:

\$_____

Please Mail your application and check to:

Congregation Beth Sholom

PO BOX 590418

San Francisco 94159-0418

Thank You! Todah Rabah!

THIS PROGRAM IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE KORET SYNAGOGUE
INITIATIVE